

**SUMMARY REPORT OF
CITY OF COTTONWOOD AD-HOC SIGN CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2007
City Council Chambers – 826 N. Main Street – 6:30 p.m.**

(Note: this is an advisory committee without formal membership. Therefore, no “absences” are listed and no binding decisions are rendered.)

Attendees

Staff:

George Gehlert, Community Dev. Director Steve Engen, Code Enforcement Officer
Carol Hulse, Planning Technician

Public (Source: sign-in sheets)

Behm, Mark	Manheim, Patt	Smith, Darold
Carl, David	Nulander, Nikki	VanWest, Ellen
Carsrud, Ron	Oates, Ronilee	Warren, Michael
Cerny, Joan	Oliphant, Bob	Wilder, Jean Ellen
Fisher, Terry	Piper, Karen	Woodburn, Mark
Mabery, Dan	Seitz, Jeff	

Agenda and Discussion Summary

Welcome and Introductions / Sign-In.

Director Gehlert welcomed attendees and asked newcomers to introduce themselves.

Process Overview.

Director Gehlert provided a brief overview of the process referencing flip charts displayed on the wall that contained issues identified at the previous meeting. He said that his goal was to present the issues and alternatives to the Planning and Zoning Commission in January or February.

Updates Regarding Committee Representation.

Director Gehlert projected a list of groups that have been identified as those who should be represented in this process. He noted that there was representation for every group identified on the list.

Discussion Regarding Process of Issue Development.

Director Gehlert projected a matrix and distributed a hand out of it. The matrix represented a condensed version of the issues on the flip charts and concerns expressed about each issue. It contained blank columns to be filled in with alternatives and staff-review of each issue. He also displayed an outline of the code and reviewed it with the committee, noting there were special

standards for different use areas. He talked about the general allowances for building mounted, freestanding, and A-frame signs and for special events. Director Gehlert invited comments and additions to the issues list.

Extensive discussion ensued. Discussion points were written on a flip chart and are summarized below.

- Decorative flags
- Pennants
- Government / Post Office / window signs
- Holiday lights up too long
- Search lights for advertising purposes
- Signs that obstruct windows
- Additional opportunities for banners. Many are event oriented.
- Eliminate distinctions between use areas or have only two areas. Simplify Director's job.
- Old Town is fun and a historic district. Special rules for historic district. Where is the border?
- Inflatables count as signs
- There are two definitions for signs {in the code}
- Define "banner"
- Impromptu banners for events
- Balloons, pennants
- Simpler temporary permit
- Enforcing A-frame sign rules and lighted signs after closing
- Over-sized real estate signs
- Menu boards
- LED signs difficult to regulate
- Education routine – identify most common problems
- Political sign police
- Sign height
- Fee for appeal is a deterrent
- Clarify appeal process
- Vehicle signs – staff explained that this relates to large signs on a vehicle parked near a business for many hours and used as a means of having additional signage. Mail carrier vehicle signs are not a concern.

Attendee David Carl asked for the number of letters/citations issued regarding signage in the last few months and an addition to the code concerning harassment regarding sign permits.

Recap of Issues / Recent letters and comments.

Director Gehlert read some letters and comments he received recently including a request for additional latitude for banners from Mary Arkush of Jerona Gallery and a more expedient permitting process. He also noted that Dr. Bob Richards had rewritten the sign code and invited Dr. Richards to comment on it.

Discussion regarding Enforcement and Permitting Issues.

Staff responded to a question about billboards saying pre-existing billboards were grandfathered and no new ones are allowed under the existing ordinance.

Director Gehlert reviewed the reasons for considering revisions to the sign code. These included enforcement difficulty with A-frames and a desire of the Council and Planning and Zoning Commission to have the code reviewed.

Director Gehlert invited Code Enforcement Officer Steve Engen to read the list of sign code enforcement issues he had developed. This list follows (in condensed form).

- Inconsistency in sign definition within the code
- Many forms of signs such as banners; pennants; flashing, animated, off premise, and moving signs are not defined
- Sign code prohibits banners but the reality is that many go up
- Are auto dealership pennants, streamers, banners, and balloons necessary
- Temporary sign permits are hard to administer and track
- Owners of permitted A-frame signs frequently do not follow the criteria
- Many sign code violations occur on weekends
- Some signs are illuminated past the permitted hours
- Some sign makers/suppliers provide customers with incorrect information
- Many business owners fail to obtain new sign permits or permits to change copy on signs
- Oversized, numerous, and improperly placed real estate signs
- Signs in the right-of-way (which are off-premise)
- Window signs should be counted in the total allowed square footage
- How should menu boards be treated
- The code should address reader boards and the frequency of display change
- Education is important – many sign code violations occur because the owner “didn’t know.”

Director Gehlert read from his list of issues and asked that they be entered into the record. These were as follows.

- The code currently does not address structural review of signs
- Sign copy – should the sign area be calculated including the background, or just the letters
- Placement in right-of-way or proximity to right-of-way
- Special directional signs - these are allowed only in commercial and industrial areas now but subdivisions want them
- Size of political signs
- Nameplates and subdivision signs
- Wayfinding
- Special district signage – such as decorative banners in Old Town (city right-of-way is not addressed in the code)
- L.E.D. signs are difficult to regulate because they change so often

- Contractor signs – code allows them for “developers” – does that include sub-contractors, bankers, realtors, etc.
- Sign walkers
- Nonconforming, dangerous, or deteriorated signs
- Pennants, flags, graphics, stripes, symbols, décor
- Murals
- Methods of sign lighting
- Anchoring A-frames
- Shopping Centers – frontage and allowance
- Special event signage
- Signs subject to Design Review Board (DRB) or zoning administrator review – Director Gehlert highlighted this one as a “big one”
- Oversize / over height – can code accommodate such requests via DRB approval
- Appearance of the sign-permit form.

One member suggested that there was not much wrong with the existing code. He suggested that staff develop recommendations for the committee's response. Several people disagreed.

Set Next Meeting Date, Time, Place - Future Agenda Items / Assignments.

Director Gehlert announced that the next meeting would be November 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

He said that he would recompose the list of issues and the committee would go through them and offer suggestions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.